

## THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION OF INDO-CHINA

assuming the reins of office. The low price of rice and the sensational drop in rubber—both antedating the depression—as well as fluctuations in the exchange, were vital factors creating suspense and uncertainty. Varenne's recall had been exploited by the colonial bloc as a victory over the pro-native party, and this feeling was to show itself in a recalcitrant resistance to any strong measure the new Governor might try to impose. Pasquier had been Varenne's chief collaborator, and many of the projects he sponsored had been initiated or conceived by his predecessor. This applied to a wide range of measures, including agricultural credit, labour legislation, the public works programme, his educational policy, and a strengthening of the provincial administration. The decentralization of local government was paralleled by a renewed autonomous movement away from Paris's interference. In ousting Varenne, his enemies had brought upon themselves intervention from a Parliament that only too accurately reflected the average Frenchman's indifference to and ignorance of colonial affairs. The rigours of the tariff of 1928, though it gave more place to Indo-China's special needs, was supplemented by the depression, and by a renewal of inter-colonial solidarity within the empire. Stabilizing the piastre by linking it to the franc further strengthened the ties between France and Indo-China. Circumstances beyond Pasquier's control, in these ways, countered his efforts to give to the colony more autonomy.

Among the thorny problems, which Pasquier had inherited from Varenne, was the rivalry between French and native functionaries. To offset the improved status of French officialdom, Pasquier raised the

salaries of native functionaries and opened to them more widely the administration's doors. Such a policy put a sudden stop to inter-functionary quarrels: all the French now banded together to oppose their native competitors. But indignation against Pasquier was to know no bounds when he cut all functionaries' salaries in order to balance the depression-struck budget. Habit was too strong for the colonials\* and they again called in the Metiopole to bring pressure to bear upon their obstinate Governor. Very cleverly Pasquier replied that he would be gkd to restore the salary cuts provided that Paris would underwrite Ilis deficit. Pasquier had already added insult to injury by enforcing strict language requirements on French functionaries. In seventy years of colonization the functionaries had foiled the efforts of thirty Governors in thi\$ matter. It took an ex-functionary like Pasquier to put an end to the farce of aa examination in. wMch the ignorance of the candidate was only matched by the **jiuy'e iadulgaabe\***, *Jfa&pi&e*